

09/711,983

REMARKS

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 17 and 24 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In accordance with this indication, the subject matter of claims 17 and 24 is appropriately revised and rewritten as new claim 25 and 26, respectively. Such newly entered independent claims are believed to be allowable. As claims 15, 16 and 19-23 all depend, either directly or indirectly, from either one of those two newly entered independent claims, those dependent claims are also believed to be allowable.

With respect to new claim 26, please note that some editorial revisions were made to this new claim so that it does not precisely correspond to the subject matter of claim 24, e.g., the removal of the double inclusion of the subject matter of claim 21 and the deletion of the term "for".

Next, claims 13 and 18-20 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Hwang et al. '205; claims 14, 15, 21 and 22 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Hwang et al. '205; while claims 16 and 23 are rejected, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as being unpatentable over Hwang et al. '205 in view of Walker '230 as applied to claims 15 and 22 and further in view of Lewis et al. '467. The Applicant acknowledges and respectfully traverses the raised anticipatory and obviousness rejections in view of the following remarks.

In view of the above claim amendments and cancellations, the Applicant respectfully submits that further comments concerning the applied prior art is not believed necessary. The Applicant also notes the remaining prior art cited in the official action. As none of that additional art is applied by the Examiner against the claims of this application, the Applicant is not providing any comments concerning that art as well.

6/10/04 4:48 PM

- 5 -

09/711,983

If any further amendment to this application is believed necessary to advance prosecution and place this case in allowable form, the Examiner is courteously solicited to contact the undersigned representative of the Applicant to discuss the same.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn at this time. If the Examiner disagrees with the Applicant's view concerning the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection(s) or applicability of the Hwang et al. '205, Walker '230 and Lewis et al. '467 references, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to indicate the specific passage or passages, or the drawing or drawings, which contain the necessary teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure required by case law. As such teaching, suggestion and/or disclosure is not present in the applied references, the raised rejection should be withdrawn at this time. Alternatively, if the Examiner is relying on his/her expertise in this field, the Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter an affidavit substantiating the Examiner's position so that suitable contradictory evidence can be entered in this case by the Applicant.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the raised rejection(s) should be withdrawn and this application is now placed in a condition for allowance. Action to that end, in the form of an early Notice of Allowance, is courteously solicited by the Applicant at this time.

The Applicant respectfully requests that any outstanding objection(s) or requirement(s), as to the form of this application, be held in abeyance until allowable subject matter is indicated for this case.

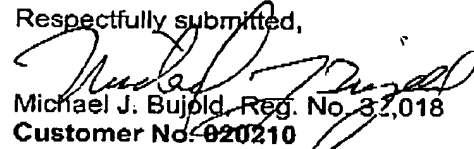
6/10/04 4:57 PM

- 6 -

09/711,983


In the event that there are any fee deficiencies or additional fees are payable, please charge the same or credit any overpayment to our Deposit Account (Account No. 04-0213).

Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being transmitted via facsimile to the United States Patent and Trademark Office on: June 10, 2004.



Michael J. Bujold
Type name of person signing certificate